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With the help of Pollard's Primer and "Saunders' Canterbury Tales," the charm of this art may well win its way into a course of instruction in English literature in our best secondary schools. For the teacher at least Chaucer need no longer stand a stranger at the door. "He will be read," says Matthew Arnold, "as time goes on, far more generally than he is read now. His language is a cause of difficulty for us; but so also, and I think in quite as great a degree, is the language of Burns. In Chaucer's case, as in that of Burns, it is a difficulty to be unhesitatingly accepted and overcome." While Mr. Pollard warns the beginner away from the Prologue for his first choice in the study of "this most human, most lovable of English poets," he says of the tales of the "Pardoner," "Nun's Priest," and "Canon's Yeomen," that "all three should be read as in the poet's best style." In them "his mastery is hardly less, while his plots are far happier" than in the other "tales of the common folk." This is the best brief introduction which we have met to an acquaintance with the poet whom Mr. Brooke calls "the first English artist," and whose mastery of his craft Mr. Pollard thinks has hardly been surpassed by the last English artist, Lord Tennyson himself.

O. B. Rhodes

The Classic Myths in English Literature. Based chiefly on Bulfinch's "Age of Fable." By CHARLES MILLS GAYLEY, Professor of the English Language and Literature in the University of California. pp. xxxviii+539. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1893.

This is our old favorite, Bulfinch's "Age of Fable," rewritten and designed as a schoolbook for the systematized presentation and interpretation of the myths that have most influenced English literature. (poetry?) The volume is furnished with one hundred and ten illustrative cuts and seven maps chiefly from other publications of Ginn & Co.

The introduction emphasizes strongly the value and importance of the study of mythology in connection with English poetry. We note a somewhat supercilious tone in speaking of our American educational methods. The "fatuity many of our secondary teachers exercise" who are not myth-intoxicated; "our gabble about methods;" "in our apprehension lest pupils may turn out parrots, we have too often turned them out loons." These may be grave defects, but they will hardly be removed by a systematic study of myths. The insistence on memoriter recitation of the best poems and verses is however entirely just. But one may well doubt whether the best poetry for the young is that which needs so much interpreting. The first three chapters give an excellent *résumé* of the various theories concerning the origin, distribution and preservation of myths. Then follow the classic

myths themselves, interspersed with illustrative poems. The canon of admission applied to the myths is that they are first-class: "because simple, spontaneous, and beautiful; because fulfilling the requirements of perennial freshness, of æsthetic potency and of ideal worth." A commentary of eighty-five pages is added that consists of notes textual, illustrative, interpretative; containing supplementary poetical citations, allusions, references, and hints to teachers and students. There are also rules for the pronunciation of Greek and Latin names, and full indexes.

The myths themselves are well told and lose in Professor Gayley's hands none of their perennial freshness. He can safely cherish the hope that Keats expressed in the preface to "Endymion:" "I hope I have not touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness." He has not so touched it; but we wish that he might have forbore to indulge in bits of unilluminating philosophy. "Sympathy with classical ideals is nowadays a rare possession." "There is no strain of simulated regret" in Wordsworth's famous sonnet. "True Christianity is not selfish"(!) "True enough from the philosophical point of view, but hardly from the poetic" is the comment on Mrs. Browning's poem, "The Dead Pan." Then it should have been excluded. And here we touch the radical defect of a finely conceived plan and an otherwise excellent book.

The canon of admission applied to the illustrative poems is stated in the preface to be "the æsthetic value of the poem or citation." It has not been kept always in the text, and the commentary in this respect is confusion worse confounded. There is a lack of judicious pruning of material, and of careful discrimination in the use of authors and poems. Of really good poetry—"simple, sensuous, impassioned"—we cannot have too much in secondary education. But of the indiscriminate use of poetry, good, bad and indifferent, by way of quotation, citation, and reference we cannot have too little. Keats we know, and Tennyson we know, but who is Erasmus Darwin to be quoted in the same breath? Of the odes of the one and the classical poems of the other we may well have memoriter recitations, but from Darwin's "Botanic Garden" and Armstrong's "Art of Health," and all of that ilk, O Lord, deliver us. Where is the gain in learning first-class myths along with second-class poetry? Not by that way will the student ever attain the appreciation so loudly lamented. He will rather lose the standard of excellence without which true appreciation is unattainable. This indiscriminate use of reference and citation vitiates the commentary and greatly lessens its value. Poets of every class and rhymers by the score are cited and referred to without a hint of relative value, and with no apparent motive except to get a reference and make a citation. It becomes a mere hunt for allusions. This is touching the beautiful poetry

of English literature only to dull its brightness, and to reduce its educational value to a minimum. Traditions are referred to in the same indiscriminate way.

Where critical guidance is suggested it is too careless and often makes the judicious grieve. It is of the sign-post order and the sign is generally an adjective. Examples are: "Talfourd's grand drama 'Ion'," the "wonderful excellence in parts" of Dobell's "Balder," "the wonderfully graceful and severe design" of Teignmouth, "of marvellous artistic and antiquarian worth were Dr. Jordan's 'Studies.'" But the favorite adjective is "exquisite." We have collated a dozen examples. It is applied to a lecture by a college president, to Stedman's "Pan in Wall Street," to Lowell's "Rhoecus," to Keats' "Ode to Psyche," and to "Endymion," to a burlesque by Andrew Lang, to the Greek poets, Bion and Moschus, to an antique, to Lodge's "Sonnet to Phyllis," to the mythical story of the death of Corythus. This is to use adjectives like a school-girl and criticism like a freshman.

Appreciation is a plant of slow growth. It cannot be forced by commercial fertilizers after this fashion. With these severe, but we trust not ungracious, strictures the book is a good one. The plan is excellent, the execution is defective. It is the only volume with which we are acquainted that attempts to trace the continuity of thought from the classic myths through English poetry and modern art. There is profuse wealth of material poured out too indiscriminately:

"Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto,
Arma virum, tabulaeque et Troia gaza per undas."

The presswork and typography of the book are excellent and errors are few. We note Bucklie for Buckley, and a reference to paragraphs 37 for 39 on pp. 434 and 441.

O. B. Rhodes

Outlines of Rhetoric. Embodied in rules, illustrative examples, and a progressive course of prose composition. By JOHN F. GENUNG, Professor of Rhetoric in Amherst College. Ginn & Co., Boston, 1893.

Teachers of rhetoric have waited somewhat impatiently for this book. "Practical Elements of Rhetoric" and the "Hand-book of Rhetorical Analysis" by the same author, have proved themselves admirably fitted for advanced work. But the need of an elementary treatise of the same general character has been distinctly felt. However, the delay has not been without its compensation, for we are told that plenty of time was taken in the preparation of the book, "in order that every part might be tested and seasoned. The result is a book of which every rule can be put to immediate use in the pupil's work."